From:	Humphrey, Jeff
To:	Debra Hill; Lesli Gray
Cc:	Susan Oetker
Subject:	WEG"s response to Extension for the Final Listing Determination for the Texas Hornshell
Date:	Wednesday, August 9, 2017 2:34:55 PM

WEG's Bethany Cotton provided the following response to our notification of the THS extension.

NOTE NEW ADDRESS:
DOI-US Fish and Wildlife Service
Attn: Jeff Humphrey
9828 North 31st Ave #C3
Phoenix AZ 85051-2517
602-242-0210
FAX: 602-242-2513
http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/

"The practice of conservation must spring from a conviction of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient." A. Leopold 1947

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Bethany Cotton** <bcotton@wildearthguardians.org>
Date: Wed, Aug 9, 2017 at 1:15 PM
Subject: Re: USFWS Announces Six-Month Deadline Extension for the Final Listing Determination for the Texas Hornshell
To: "Humphrey, Jeff" <jeff_humphrey@fws.gov>
Cc: Taylor Jones <tjones@wildearthguardians.org>

Hi Jeff-

Yes, I saw that in the Federal Register inspection desk today. As you can imagine, we find the further delay, after years of inaction, concerning to say the least. If we can assist you in expediting this already long overdue decision, please let me know. As is always the case, we expect you to make the listing decision solely based on the best available science, not on political pressure by states or industry, as required by law.

Bethany

On Wed, Aug 9, 2017 at 1:39 PM, Humphrey, Jeff <jeff_humphrey@fws.gov> wrote:

> Hello Bethany,
>
> Want to make certain that you've seen our announcement of a six-month extension on the deadline for making a final determination on whether to list the Texas hornshell under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Service is taking this action on its 2016 proposal to list this freshwater mussel in order to solicit additional scientific information on the status of the species in Mexico. We will make a final listing determination no later than February 10, 2018.
>
> This announcement will publish in the Federal Register on Thursday, August 10th and is

available for public inspection in the Reading Room today, August 9th. A 30-day public comment period will begin upon publication of the Notice.

Bethany, let me know if you have questions.

Jeff

Service Announces Six-Month Deadline Extension for the Final Listing Determination for the Texas Hornshell

Agency seeks additional information from public and scientific community

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced a six-month extension to its deadline for making a final determination on whether to list the Texas hornshell under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Service is taking this action on its 2016 proposal to list this freshwater mussel in order to solicit additional scientific information on the status of the species in Mexico. Accordingly, the Service is reopening the public comment period on the proposed rule for 30 days. We will make a final listing determination no later than February 10, 2018.

On July 7, 2017, the Service announced the availability of a draft Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA), draft Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) and draft environmental assessment for the Texas hornshell and four other aquatic species that are found in west Texas and southeastern New Mexico. If the Service finalizes the CCA and CCAA, landowners and industry could sign up under these agreements during the six month deadline extension to the listing determination.

Once abundant throughout rivers in the Rio Grande basin in southern New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico and in rivers on the Mexican Gulf Coast, the Texas hornshell has experienced a dramatic decline. Today, it is the only native mussel remaining in New Mexico and is scarce in Texas, occupying only 15% of its historical U.S. range. River fragmentation and loss as a result of impoundments and reduced water quality and quantity are negatively impacting the Texas hornshell and other freshwater mussels across the Southwest. After thoroughly reviewing the best available science, on August 10, 2016, the Service proposed protecting the mussel as endangered under the ESA.

The Service encourages the public to review and provide comments on the listing proposal during the 30-day public comment period. Written comments must be received by close of business on September 11, 2017. Written comments may be submitted by one of the following methods:

(1) Electronically: Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: http://www.regulations.gov. In the Search box, enter FWS–R2–ES–2016–0077. You may submit a comment by clicking on "Comment Now!"
(2) By hard copy: Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS–R2–ES–2016–0077; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters, MS: BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803.

The Service asks that the public not resubmit previously submitted comments or information on the proposed rule. The Service has already incorporated them into the public record, and

will fully consider them in the preparation of the final determination. The Service will consider all additional information, comments and recommendations received from all interested parties with the intention that any final action resulting from this proposal be as accurate as possible and based on the best available scientific and commercial data.

America's fish, wildlife, and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. We're working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit http://www.fws.gov/. Connect with our Facebook page, follow our tweets, watch our YouTube Channel and download photos from our Flickr page.

-FWS-

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"Every morning I awake torn between a desire to save the world and an inclination to savor it. This makes it hard to plan the day."
— E.B. White